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Patent

**Abstract of the Disclosure**

A data processor and a method for processing data is disclosed. The processor has an input port for receiving packets of data to be processed. A master controller acts to analyse the packets and to provide a header including a list of processes to perform on the packet of data and an ordering thereof. The master controller is programmed with process related data relating to the overall processing function of the processor. The header is appended to the packet of data. The packet with the appended header information is stored within a buffer. A buffer controller acts to determine for each packet stored within the buffer based on the header within the packet a next processor to process the packet. The controller then provides the packet to the determined processor for processing. The processed packet is returned with some indication that the processing is done. For example, the process may be deleted from the list of processes. The buffer controller repeatedly makes a determination of a next process until there is no next process for a packet at which time it is provided to an output port.

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